

Western Bulldogs Past Players



July 2023 Newsletter

1960S PAST PLAYERS REUNION

We are inviting all players, officials and their partners from the 1960s to come to the Reunion function at the Round 23 clash with West Coast on **Sunday 20 August** at Marvel Stadium.

A host of ex-players and officials will be in attendance to celebrate

- 1961 Grand Finalists
- 1962 Reserve Grade Premiership
- 1963 Night Premiership
- 1964 Night Premiership
- 1967 Night Premiership
- Special guests will be interviewed pre-game.

DATE & TIME

Sunday 20 August 2023

Pre-Game Function: 12pm-1pm (Gates open from 11.30am)

MATCH DETAILS

Round 23| Western Bulldogs vs West Coast

Marvel Stadium Bounce: 1.10pm

VENUE

The function will be hosted in Victory Room C, located inside Marvel Stadium on Level 1 (between Aisles 14-16)

FOOD & DRINKS

Food and drinks will be available to purchase from within Victory Room C. A bistro menu with meals will be available to purchase up until 15 minutes into the first quarter. Pies, pastries and other snacks will then be available to purchase.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Owen Madigan John Schultz Len Cumming Graeme Joslin Ron McGowan Gordan Casey Graeme Cook Jack Slattery Ray Baxter Ray Walker Les Bartlett Ian Bryant

BULLDOGS 1980S REUNION

It was the who's who of the 1980s at the 2nd June reunion at Luke Darcy's Precinct Hotel in Richmond. Two of the Bulldogs greatest goal kickers, Simon Beasley and Kelvin Templeton, were locked in conversation early in the evening. They combined for a massive 1,069 goals (Simon 575, Kelvin 494) in their years at the Dogs. Their careers crossed over for one season (1982) when Simon burst onto the scene booting 82 for the year in a stunning debut. Kelvin had been the dominant forward in the competition in the years prior winning the Coleman Medal in 1978 (118 goals) and 1979 (91 goals) and then claiming the Brownlow Medal in 1980 when he kicked 75 from centre half forward. Kelvin's absence from the Australian Football Hall of Fame remains a mystery. Rant finished. KT was one of a host of players from the Latrobe Valley and East Gippsland including Rick Kennedy, Steve Wallis, Neil and Brian Cordy, Darren Grant, Alistair Ford and Brian Royal. The following night at the Bulldogs v Geelong match Alistair was presented his recognition jumper by his old house mate Darren Grant. Chocco Royal was presented his recognition jumper by his great mate Steve Wallis. A big shout out to Mark Kellett for organising the event at the Precinct, we wish him good luck for his upcoming hip replacement.



PRE-MATCH FUNCTIONS



R8 in Canberra (Robert Anderson pictured)



R8 in Canberra Ross Abbey, Tony McGuinness with son Oscar who is a member of the Australian Rowing team.jpg



R13 Dennis Blair Terry O'Brien Len Cumming Paul O'Connor Owen Madigan Brian Lake George Brown And Jack Di Natale



R13 Jason Watts and Ilija Grgic and family members

One giant leap forward for Matt-kind

Matthew Robbins Playing Profile:	
D.O.B	08/06/1977
Height:	178cm
Weight:	87kg
Club(s):	Geelong, Western Bulldogs
Games:	139
Goals:	135

By Ross Brundrett

Like so many gifted young sportspeople, Matt Robbins had to make a difficult choice while still in his teens – push forward with a promising athletics career or try and make his name in the ruthless business of AFL football.

"I'd been doing well in schoolboy athletics. I'd clocked 10.4 for the 100 metres and I was probably the best long jumper in Victoria but then I had a pretty good season with the Sandy Dragons in the Teal Cup which attracted some interest from the Sydney Swans and Geelong," he said.

In the end he decided to enter the draft knowing that if things didn't work out he could easily re-focus and aim for the upcoming Sydney Olympics.

"As it turned out, Geelong took me in the second round (pick 36) after the Swans opted instead for a kid called Michael O'Loughlin, so that was the end of my athletic career...

"It was probably the right choice. I wasn't the ideal build for a long jumper being only 5 feet 10," said Robbins, whose schoolboy best jump of 7.5 metres would have landed him in the top 15 at the Sydney Olympics four years later.



After a promising start with the Cats playing in the back half injury saw him out of the side and he couldn't find a way back into the seniors in a frustrating second year before an offer from Bulldogs' coach Terry Wallace saw him make the move to Whitten Oval.

While he proved a handy player with his turn of foot, both as a defender and tagger, his big break came when the next Bulldog coach, Peter Rhode, moved him to the forward line.

"I'd never really spent much time up there but I was a decent kick and it worked out pretty well and I ended up kicking 29 goals in my first season as a small forward. "

"Under Rodney Eade we seemed to develop a pretty dangerous forward line with players like Bob Murphy and Mitch Hahn and Brad Johnson of course, so it was an exciting time to be a Bulldog."

If there was a downside it was that often they would be outsized by opposition defenders and Robbins copped his fair share of hard knocks. "I remember once coming off second-best after a hip and shoulder from Glen Jakovich gave me concussion I must have been knocked unconscious 10 times or more in my career," said Robbins who says he still suffers side effects including seizures.

But that didn't stop the former long jumper from leaping fearlessly to some sensational speckies.

"You have a bit more freedom to launch at the ball up forward and I was lucky enough to grab a few, although I always say the best mark I ever took was in the seconds, running the same way as the

ball. When I jumped I got a ride on someone's shoulder and I ended up a couple of metres higher but it wasn't televised so nobody saw it." he rued.

He booted 31 goals from 16 games in 2005 and a career-best 45 goals in 2006 but pulled the pin the following year, kicking three goals in his final game, which was also Luke Darcy's final match.

"I remember lining up against North Melbourne hard man Glenn Archer and I told him to go easy on me and he just smiled and said, 'this is my last year as well'."

Although he was only 30 at the time, Robbins said that persistent calf injuries had frustrated his progress during the year and he had struggled to stay motivated.

"I kept playing in the amateurs and ended up winning a premiership with my brother at Ormond so that was a pretty good way to end things," he said.



After working as a carpenter and builder, Matt has put away his tools and is working as a site manager at Lara. "We moved out of Melbourne during the pandemic and we're now living at Ocean Grove and it has been the best decision. I'm assistant coach of the Ocean Grove under 16s and both my boys, James and Joey, are playing here and I also help out with the club's academy and I really enjoy that." Foot(ball)note: It's probably worth noting that Ocean Grove's under 16 side recently recorded a handy win over St Joseph's College side, coached by a bloke by the name of Adam Cooney.



The Two Dogs Podcast

Episode 25: Murray Zeuschner and George Bissett

<https://omny.fm/shows/the-two-dogs-podcast/twodogs-ep403>

Website

Our website includes:

- previous editions of the newsletter
- podcasts
- match day information

The address is:

www.westernbulldogs.com.au/pastplayers.

By Neil Cordy

Ozzy's Bulldogs Heritage

Richard Osborne Playing Profile:
D.O.B 16/06/1964
Height: 182cm
Weight: 86kg
Club(s): Fitzroy, Sydney, Footscray and Collingwood
Games: 286 in total (51 for Footscray)
Goals: 575

Richard Osborne has just come through a week from hell but graciously agreed to be interviewed about his time at the Bulldogs. His mother Bev passed away on his birthday at the age of 92 on June 16. Then on the day of this interview news came through that his former Fitzroy teammate and skipper Matt Rendell had also died.

"It makes you realise just how fragile life is," Richard said.

Richard had loved his time with Matt at the Lions but when he ended up at the Bulldogs in 1994, via the Sydney Swans, he'd made his mum the happiest woman in Melbourne. Bev was a lifelong Dogs supporter. Her father, Richard's grandfather, Jack Watt played for Footscray in the 1920s.

"Mum was pretty happy when I went there," Richard said.

"For me to go there after 12 years at Fitzroy and Sydney was a dream come true."

Jack Watt played 35 games in 1928 and 1929 and like his grandson was a very talented player.

"He played for Victoria," Richard said.

"Unfortunately he got a cartilage injury to his knee. I those days it was enough to finish you." So when Richard made his debut in the red, white and blue against Adelaide at Footy Park (Round 5, 1994) he was reconnecting with the club 65 years after his grandfather played his last game.

Richard's route to the Kennel was as circuitous as it was long. When he'd made up his mind to leave the Lions at the end of 1992 the Bulldogs made their first approach. "I was in Mexico on Holidays and my manager asked me if I wanted to go to the Western Bulldogs?" Richard said.

"All I could think of was the Western Oval and freezing weather. I just said no." He nominated for the draft and was picked up by Sydney. In 1993 the Swans were in the middle of a horror stretch of losing games and winning wooden spoons.



“With all due respect to the Swans I didn’t want to go there,” Richard said. “I was forced to go there because of the rules with the draft then. The rules were I had to go or sit out of footy for 12 months.”

Bulldogs Football Manager Mark Kleiman showed interest again and this time he got his man. But it wasn’t a straight-forward transaction. Richard was pursuing a career as a punter in the NFL and had try outs with the LA Rams and the San Diego Chargers. The trials delayed his start at the Bulldogs.

“It was before Darren Bennett, Sav Rocca and Ben Graham went over to the US,” Richard said.

“The Rams special teams coach was keen but was sacked over the summer and had his own punter so that was it. It’s one of my genuine regrets in footy that I didn’t come back for the start of the season in 1994.” It was a late start (Round 5) to the season but it didn’t take long for Ossie to hit his straps. The Bulldogs finished fifth under Alan Joyce and met Geelong in the qualifying final.

“I kicked the goal to put us in front,” Richard said. “When I kicked that goal to put us in front, I had a fleeting thought that it was payback for me doing the wrong thing by the Bulldogs and going to America.

“It would have been nice if we won that game. Then Billy Brownless took a mark on the siren and kicked the winning goal after the siren.” 1995 was even better for Osborne kicking 52 goals to win the Bulldogs goal kicking but they lost again to Geelong in the elimination final. A badly broken arm finished his 1996 season early and a change of coaches saw him off to Collingwood at the end of the year.



“I really did enjoy my time at the Bulldogs,” Richard said.

“Similar to Fitzroy we were a working-class club and didn’t have a lot of money. But it was a terrific bunch of blokes.”

ANDREW HOWLETT: a boyhood dream comes true

By Michael Stevens



It's fair to say Andrew Howlett achieved his boyhood dream when he made his debut with Footscray against St Kilda in round six of the 1987 season.

Growing up in North Sunshine into a football-oriented family (his grandparents and mother Nola and father Leon all barracked for the Bulldogs) Howlett's boyhood hero was Kelvin Templeton, and he says he is still in awe of another club great Doug Hawkins, with whom he is in regular contact as treasurer of the club's past players.

But getting back to that round six debut as a raw 19-year-old, but solidly built 188cm and 82.5kg.

More than 35 years later, Howlett has vivid recollections of his first game. The first that came to mind was that the match clashed with his brother Nigel's 21st birthday celebrations and his mother couldn't be there because she had to stay home and get ready for the party.

"It was a typical VFL Park day," he said. "Wet, cold, windy and raining."

Howlett started on the forward flank against Robert "Scratcher" Neal and remembers his first goal when he intercepted a Danny Frawley kick-out because it was featured as the play of the day in The Australian newspaper.

The game was also significant because St Kilda's Frank Coghlan was reported for striking him. "He got off after everyone followed the normal process (alluding to the fact that in those days evidence given at VFL Tribunals didn't always agree with the facts)," he said.

Howlett played his junior football with Cross Roads and played a couple of games with Footscray Under 19s in 1984. The following season was his HSC year and his parents were very stong on him achieving a good education, so as a 17-year-old he played with Sunshine YCW in what is now the WRFL.

"Gary Merrington (then involved with the Bulldogs recruiting after a stellar career) said that was a bad mistake and I went back to the club in 1986," Howlett said.

After his debut senior game, Howlett played only one more senior match, the following week, against North Melbourne at the Whitten Oval, but that was also memorable, for probably the wrong reason.

A second quarter tangle of legs with former AFL chief Andrew Demetriou saw Howlett suffer an ankle ligament injury that was to forestall his career.

"One kicked on and the other one didn't," he joked of his Demetriou altercation.

"On reflection I probably came back too quickly. I remember as a junior we never used to have our ankles strapped, and having them strapped at Footscray probably meant they got weakened before they got stronger. "I missed the next week and consequently came back through the reserves, but I was continually getting injured. "The following season (1988), I did the pre-season and played in a senior practice match against Geelong where I did my ankle again, but didn't think too much of it.

"In those days the bean counters ruled the world as well and I was delisted on June 30. Mick Malthouse (then senior coach) probably figured I was no good or always getting injured."

Despite that disappointment, Howlett continued to train with the Bulldogs and was a fly-in, fly-out player with Glenorchy in Tasmania where former Bulldog Robert Groenewegen was captain-coach. Howlett played 14 games with Glenorchy, including the Grand Final, when beaten by Devonport. The following year, Howlett says he was set to sign with Werribee in the VFA before being convinced by Barry Round and Grant Smith to sign with Williamstown instead.

His career at Williamstown continued from 1989 to 1998 with a couple of seasons (94-95) at Lara with another Bulldog Ian Rickman. Howlett completed his football journey with a stint as player and coach at Werribee Centrals in the Geelong and District Football League, winning three Grand Finals.



Andrew and Helen Howlett with Jenni and Barry Round

"At 34, when you have 18-year-olds trying to stand on your shoulders and you can't get off the ground, I knew it was time to walk away," he said.

Family (he and wife Helen will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary next year and he also has daughters Madeline and Emily and son Josh) and work, and his treasurer's role at the past players occupy his time these days.

But he also has the best of both worlds being able to spend six months of the year at Noosa and six months at home at Hoppers Crossing and also being able to work at his own pace as commercial finance manager with waste management company Cleanaway.

2023 Membership subscriptions

- Former Player or Official \$50
- Partner \$50

Please forward any changes to your address, mobile or email to Owen Madigan 0408 105 151 or belplas1@bigpond.com

Polo Shirts

Western Bulldogs Polo shirts are available for \$65 (including GST, postage and handling). Shirts for former senior players will include their player number on the shirt at no extra charge. To order - send the following information to westernbulldogspastplayers@gmail.com or 0418510635



Adam Contessa photographed wearing the 2023 polo

Name
Postal address
Mobile
Shirt size - M L XL XXL XXXL

How to Pay:

By EFT to: Footscray Western Bulldogs Past Players **BSB:** 633 000 **Account:** 199 932 344

Please use your surname as payment identification.

By credit card: Contact Treasurer Andrew Howlett on 0418 510 635

Player Welfare

We strongly recommend past players join the AFLPA Alumni. Benefits include:

- up to \$500 refund on excess payments when in hospital, if you are in a private health fund
- up to \$8000 refund for extra operation charges should you require surgery on body joints, including damaged teeth
- an opportunity to seek funds from the Geoff Pryor Fund or an Injury and Hardship fund in the event of suffering financial hardship.

The one-off joining fee is \$50. To join, contact Chris Smith at AFLPA on 0400 019 391 or csmith@aflplayers.com.au.

2023 Committee

President	Ross Abbey	0412 073 092
Vice President	Phil O'Keeffe	0402 007 270
Secretary	Owen Madigan	0408 105 151
Treasurer	Andrew Howlett	0418 510 635
Committee	Les Bartlett	0416 485 652
	Adam Contessa	0416 081 259
	Graeme Joslin	0412 771 235
	Gary McGorlick	0409 804 057
	Len Cumming	0418 374 079
AFLCPP Delegate	Jack Slattery	0425 746 148

2023 Events Calendar

Friday 22nd September	12pm	AFLCPP Medallist Lunch at Hyatt on the Park
Sunday 12th November	11am	AGM venue TBC
	12pm	End of Year Lunch following the AGM
Sunday 19th November	10am	AFLCPP Bowls Day at Essendon Bowls Club

Happy Birthday!

Celebrating milestones

90th Birthday:

John Westacott

D.O.B: 9/8/1933

Height: 188cm

Weight: 90kg

Club(s) played for: Footscray
(1955-1957, 1959)

Games Played: 34 (20-1-13)

422nd player listed



80th Birthday:

Peter Ennals

D.O.B: 23/7/1943

Height: 188cm

Weight: 86kg

Club(s) played for: Footscray
(1965)

Games Played: 1 (0-0-1)

531st player listed

70th Birthday:

Terry Wilkins

D.O.B: 4/7/1953

Height: 178cm

Weight: 72kg

Club(s) played for: Footscray (1973-1974),
Melbourne (1975-1976)

Games Played: 20 (9-1-10)

Goals: 1

619th player listed



Terry Wilkins (right) with cousin
Alan Stoneham

60th Birthday:

Les Bamblett

D.O.B: 5/8/1963

Height: 178cm

Weight: 85kg

Club(s) played for: Melbourne (1983),
Footscray (1984-1988)

Games Played: 37 (22-0-15)

Goals: 59

751st player listed



40th Birthday:

Kieran McGuinness

D.O.B: 8/7/1983

Height: 190cm

Weight: 88kg

Club(s) played for: Western Bulldogs
(2002-2006)

Games Played: 26 (5-2-19)

Goals: 7

899th player listed



40th Birthday:

D.O.B: 2/7/1983

Height: 190cm

Weight: 82kg

Club(s) played for: Western Bulldogs
(2002-2007)

Games Played: 84 (28-2-54)

Goals: 16

900th player listed





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PFG Australia is a family owned, fully independent group of companies who have a three-generation history of serving the New Zealand and Australia tractor and machinery markets. Justin Whitford is the Chief Executive Officer.



Midway Concrete and Garden and Building Supplies services the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne with centres at Melton, South Marang, Laverton North and Craigieburn. It is a family-owned business run by Dave Boxshall. It was established in 1984.



Flash Fabrications specialise in customised architectural metal fabrication in the construction industry. It is a family-owned business run by Dave Marsh. It was established in 2004 and is in Hoppers Crossing. (Dave is the son of Ivan Marsh who represented the Bulldogs with distinction in 77 games between 1963-67)



Tosca have a wide range of products including hard and soft sided trolley cases, suitcases, wheels bags, cooler bags, wallets, backpacks, business bags, accessories and much more. It is a family-owned business run by Noel Pearce and his sons. It was established in 1996 and has a factory outlet in East Keilor.